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ABSTRACT

The success of the cooperative program of Millikin University and the Community College of Decatur is often cited by Illinois educators as a model of private-public institutional cooperation. The purpose of this paper is to describe the planning, problems, and implementation of this cooperative program. For the academic year 1972-73, Millikin agreed to offer the Community College of Decatur (CCD) certain courses on a contractual basis and also to permit coenrollment of CCD students in specified Millikin lower division courses on a space-available basis. For all courses offered, the institutions agreed that (1) CCD would have responsibility for registration, course material, scheduling, student evaluations, submission of grades, and disciplinary matters; (2) CCD would have the right to cancel any course if the total enrollment fell below ten students; and (3) Millikin would have the right to select faculty for the courses. During the three quarters of the 1972-73 academic year, Millikin offered on contract 35 class sections that represented 13 separate academic courses. In all, 574 CCD students received instruction in those courses. There is every indication that the 1973-74 winter and spring quarter offerings will show a continuation of this trend. (Author/PG)

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A MODEL FOR PRIVATE-PUBLIC COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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The purpose of this paper is to describe the planning and implementation of a cooperative program in higher education involving Millikin University and the Community College of Decatur in Illinois. The success of this collaborative endeavor is often cited by Illinois educators as a model of private-public institutional cooperation.

Cooperation between these two institutions can best be understood in the context of both national and state efforts to coordinate educational services in higher education. In 1964 Wayne W. Anderson directed 300 inquiries to individual college and university administrators, directors of cooperative centers, and other educators in an effort to deduce types of cooperative endeavors with which they were concerned. Even in those comparatively affluent times he found a "rush to cooperate in higher education," though it was clear that what Earl Cheit would later call a "new depression in higher education" was not then a major catalyst for new inter-institutional structures. Rather, the motivation then was a sense of plenitude, a sense of opening new educational horizons, perhaps even an overwhelming hubris that recognized no boundaries to expansion and that lusted after the magnitude of corporate conglomerates.

That the limits of growth are finite is now universally recognized in higher education, and the age of the educational entrepreneur has been replaced by the age of coordinated planning. Statewide coordinating or governing educational boards have become a way of life in many states; and the roles they play in avoiding unhealthy institutional competition, costly

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duplication of services, and needless capital expansion have become paramount. In many states these roles prescribe a careful assessment of the function and importance of private higher education, and in few states has this led to more controversy than in Illinois.

Illinois has more than 120 public or private colleges and universities, and these include 38 public community colleges. As in many states, the percentage of students--and the resultant budgetary implications--in public institutions has risen dramatically over the past decade. The 1971 Master Plan Phase III of the Illinois Board of Higher Education points out a growth of students in public institutions from 96,000 in 1960 to 325,000 in 1970 (an increase of 338%). And at the same time numerous private colleges have closed, adopted stringent measures in the face of dwindling enrollments and budgetary deficits, or welcomed the coordinating authority of the State Board of Higher Education as a ray of hope in an otherwise bleak horizon.

Master Plan Phase III of the State Board directs itself to the plight of private higher education and to the imminent effects of financial shortages on public institutions. As a strategy for confronting these problems, it proposes "a collegiate common market," a sharing among public and private institutions of resources, programs, and opportunities. While the plan ultimately implied a statewide network that avoided costly duplication, maximized usage of resources, and provided greater and more numerous options for students, the document asserted that "regional efforts are clearly the first step in many program areas." The Executive Director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education who presided over the formulation of the Master Plan has since left his position and the state; and with him has gone much of the enthusiastic rhetoric--and perhaps controversy--that surrounded imposed patterns of inter-institutional cooperation. However, several

"regional efforts" did take place, and it remains to be seen whether the present Executive Director will continue this emphasis.

Millikin University is a private, church related, undergraduate university of approximately 1500 full-time students. Located in Decatur, an industrial-residential community of nearly 100,000, it is the only senior institution within a 35-mile radius. Moreover, prior to 1971 Decatur and its environs were one of the most heavily populated areas in Illinois not to be included in a public community college district. Two referenda to establish the territory as such a district had failed prior to that time, and the Board of Higher Education was faced with the dilemma of whether or not to authorize the holding of a third referendum, this time with a revised territory excluding those rural areas that contributed most to the defeat of the earlier referenda. On the recommendation of the executive director and his staff, the Board authorized the holding of the third referendum--but only if the new community college would (should the referendum pass) serve as a pilot institution for the common market ideal embodied in the Master Plan. The referendum carried convincingly; and, when the Board of Trustees of the new college was elected, one of its first decisions was that the community college would begin operations within nine months.

The fact that only nine months separated the election of the Community College of Decatur trustees from the time of the proposed beginning of classes proved to be more a blessing than a handicap. Because a presidential search had to be carried out concurrently with the rapid development of plans for the acceptance of the first students, the trustees were forced to seek an interim administrator; and the luck of that appointment--certainly more than could have been expected or planned for--proved decisive in establishing the practical groundwork for a successful experiment in inter-institutional cooperation. Selected as interim administrator was

a retired former Executive Director of the Illinois Junior College Board, who held the respect of community college trustees and personnel throughout the state; and he immediately appointed as his chief academic officer a staff member from the state Junior College Board who was also widely experienced as a community college administrator. These two men, both of whom had been active on the state educational scene at the time the "common market" ideal was being promoted, worked painstakingly over a period of months with the Acting Vice President for Academic Affairs at Millikin in working out a format for cooperative arrangements.

While these representatives of the two institutions tediously developed the initial agreements for cooperation, one prescription--articulated clearly in the minutes of an ad hoc committee that had earlier considered areas of cooperation--was: "Whatever arrangement may ultimately seem plausible and mutually beneficial, the integrity of Millikin University, in light of its historic role in Decatur and as a leader in private education, must be maintained, while at the same time encouraging the fullest growth and development of the Community College." Moreover, in the case of both institutions there were significant financial problems. Millikin had finished the previous year with a budgetary deficit; and the Community College, because the third referendum had excluded large areas of valuable and sparsely populated farmland from its boundaries, had assumed responsibility for a highly populated urban area (with a high potential for numbers of students) with a relatively low, hardly viable economic base. Both institutions would clearly have to exercise great husbandry of their resources.

The Community College leased temporary facilities in a recently vacated downtown bank building located slightly more than a mile from the Millikin University campus. While the building was in reasonably good

repair and was located in close proximity to an area vocational center (which offered facilities for technical-vocational programs), it was limited both in classroom capacity and in space suited to laboratory facilities. Likewise, a small full-time instructional staff was employed. However, it was immediately clear that the first-year curriculum would be limited, that primary service would be directed toward the freshman (not the Decatur resident who might wish to transfer to the new college for a sophomore year), and that part-time faculty would have to be employed to provide first-year flexibility.

The "common market" concept posits that cooperative endeavors between private and public institutions can strengthen both, and that the taxpayer will be the ultimate winner. Arguments for this position are obvious: (1) private education is in severe economic trouble because of dwindling enrollments and concommitant budgetary problems. If private education should succumb to these pressures and cease to serve, the state (i.e., the taxpayer) would suddenly find itself with a major new financial obligation; (2) private education provides particular services and has previously made capital investments that are presently being under-utilized; yet the state could not duplicate such services or facilities nearly so economically as they could contract for their use; (3) economic combinations of institutional holdings obviously benefit the student, either by increasing his curricular options or by providing his educational needs in closer proximity to his home or work. It is well to consider what both Millikin and the Community College had to gain from a cooperative arrangement; that can best be revealed by describing the arrangements which were developed.

For the academic year 1972-73, Millikin agreed to offer for the Community College of Decatur (CCD) certain courses on a contractual basis and also to

permit co-enrollment of CCD students in specified Millikin lower-division courses on a space-available basis. Because CCD lacked scientific equipment and laboratory facilities, Millikin contracted to offer all instruction in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics; this agreement prescribed Millikin's furnishing faculty, facilities, and library resources. The financial arrangement for science courses (CCD paid $40 per quarter credit hour per student) revealed a pattern that would recur in most arrangements; that is, the fee represented a sum between the direct costs incurred by Millikin and the actual costs CCD estimated it would incur should it seek to duplicate the services. (Millikin used as a benchmark its evening school tuition rate of $55 per semester hour, a sum considerably less than the per-credit-hour costs for day or full-time students. CCD had available cost information on science courses throughout the state junior college system). In addition, Millikin contracted to offer courses in Art Appreciation and Music Appreciation for $36 per quarter credit hour per student. For all courses offered on a contractual basis, the institutions agreed that (1) CCD would have responsibility for registration, course material, scheduling, student evaluations, submission of grades, and disciplinary matters; (2) CCD would have the right to cancel any course if the total enrollment fell below ten students; and (3) Millikin would have the right to select faculty for the courses. During the three quarters of the 1972-73 academic year, Millikin offered on contract 35 class sections which represented 13 separate academic courses. In all, 574 CCD students received instruction in those courses. The fall quarter of the 1973-74 academic year indicated a marked increase over the preceding fall in this arrangement. Millikin offered 20 class sections (up 54%) which represented eight separate courses (up 33.3%) and served 326 CCD students (up 39%). There is every indication that the 1973-74

winter and spring quarter offerings will show a continuation of this trend.

While it was apparent from the beginning that co-enrollment offered great promise for economies in both institutions, the arrangement itself was a sensitive one. The tuition disparity between the two institutions was significant, and potential resentment of the arrangements by Millikin students remained a spectre in staff planning. In a letter of May 17, 1972, Millikin's president made quite clear to CCD that the co-enrollment arrangement was experimental and carried no insurance of permanence. "Although this is a sensitive area for a number of reasons," he wrote, "we believe that this practice should be given a trial for at least a year in an attempt to determine the real advantages and disadvantages."

The co-enrollment plan permitted CCD to provide offerings in Music, Physical Education, and Foreign Languages during the first year of operation. The arrangement itself was simple: Millikin courses approved for co-enrollment were listed in the CCD class schedule and CCD students were permitted to enroll in the classes as long as spaces remained after Millikin's registration. CCD paid Millikin $32 per quarter credit hour per student in these co-enrolled courses. In co-enrolled classes Millikin had responsibility for course materials, scheduling, student evaluations, submission of grades, and disciplinary matters, rather than CCD's assuming these responsibilities. Some of the courses in which co-enrollment was possible did not prove popular for CCD students; however, offerings in foreign languages proved particularly successful. In all, 82 CCD students were co-enrolled with Millikin students during the 1972-73 academic year. As with the contracted courses, the fall quarter of 1973-74 indicated a marked increase (up 185%) over the preceding fall in co-enrolled students. Moreover, the number of offerings increased

significantly, especially as a result of Millikin's agreeing to increased offerings in Physical Education.

Though the patterns of cooperation have been in effect for only a year and a half and no formal or complete evaluation has taken place, the assumption that no problems have arisen would be erroneous. Consider, for example, the following:

1. Millikin is on a 4-1-4 semester calendar with a predominant day schedule; CCD is on a quarter calendar with an evenly distributed day-night schedule. While contracted courses are offered on the quarter system, co-enrolled courses are on the semester. Even if CCD changed to a semester calendar (which is not anticipated), it is unlikely that the 4-1-4 would prove satisfactory. Differences in calendars lead to problems in registration, grade reporting, and credit equating.

2. CCD is presently housed in temporary quarters, and the location of the permanent campus will obviously have some effect on cooperative relationships. If CCD is ultimately located in relatively convenient proximity to the Millikin campus, the chances of continued and increased cooperation will be enhanced. On the other hand, the time lag that presently exists in building plans for Illinois community colleges projects this consideration ambiguously far into the future.

3. The increasing breadth of the CCD district, which has implications both for tax base and for size of the student body, has potential implications for cooperative arrangements. As a result of recent legislation, territories annexed to the district (pending further development) could double the tax base and

increase the potential student body significantly. Presently CCD co-enrolled and contracted-class students represent a small percentage of students on the Millikin campus. What would happen to Millikin's posture if the size of the CCD district should create circumstance that would greatly increase the ratio of CCD to Millikin students? This question has not been answered, but it will clearly have to be in the near future.

4. Responsibility for faculty evaluation and right of access to instruments for faculty evaluation remains undecided. Both institutions, for example, use student questionnaires as significant components in the over-all evaluation system. Does the CCD administration have access to evaluations of Millikin faculty members in which CCD students are co-enrolled? Ultimately this question will have to be answered.

5. The responses of faculty to cooperative arrangements have not yet been thoroughly examined. There is no doubt that a community college student body is more heterogeneous in many respects than that of a private liberal arts college, and student heterogeneity certainly constitutes an additional burden for the classroom teacher. What salary implications does the assuming of this additional burden have? Should the salary scales of the two institutions become noticeably dissimilar, what implications would this have on cooperative arrangements? These questions have begun to be asked, and answers will have to be forthcoming.

Even in the view of problems that have surfaced and of the relatively short period of its history, the experience of Millikin and the Community College of Decatur offers some basis for generalizations. First, the program has to date been beneficial to both institutions. Millikin has been able to

secure financial remuneration for increased usage of its facilities, and CCD has been able to offer a curricular breadth that would have been impossible under other circumstances. Second, the arrangements themselves are not static; they evolve from quarter to quarter. Whether or not they are truly innovative in higher education, both the participants perceive them to be so, and the excitement of a pioneering enterprise is certainly an asset. Finally, the cooperative spirit evidenced in the arrangement has no doubt increased community support for both institutions. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the public is weary of paying for institutional jealousies, duplication of services, and mindless proliferation of educational enterprises. The Millikin-CCD experience gives promise that such wastes can be avoided and, perhaps more importantly, that exciting new arrangements can be developed for private-public cooperation in higher education.

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